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United Nations Forum on Forests
Ad Hoc Expert Group on Consideration with a View to Recommending the Parameters of a Mandate for Developing a Legal Framework on All Types of Forests
New York, 7-10 September 2004
Agenda item 4 (b)
Tasks of the Expert Group

Overview of catalysts and obstacles in the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action and resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Note by the Secretariat*

Summary

The objective of the present note is to provide background information to assist the ad hoc expert group in analysing the catalysts and obstacles impacting on the implementation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action and the resolutions and decisions of the sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests. Information on implementation was drawn from four primary sources: national reports, the reports of the Secretary-General to the sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework documents and the reports of the country-led and organization-led initiatives.

Principal factors catalysing the implementation of the proposals for action include good governance, national forest programmes, the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management, forest partnerships, global and regional cooperation frameworks, stakeholder participation, and country-led and organization-led initiatives. Principal obstacles at the national level cover issues, such as inadequate institutional mechanisms for assessing progress in the implementation of the proposals for action, insufficient knowledge of the proposals

* Submission of the present report was delayed in order to include updated information.

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for action, financial constraints, inadequate forest assessment capabilities, disincentives that work against sustainable forest management, inadequate transfer of environmentally sound technologies and limited capabilities for implementing the proposals for action.

The foundation laid by the Ministerial Declaration at the second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests has broadly widened the scope of the proposals for action by linking sustainable forest management to the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

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I. Introduction

1. The United Nations Forum on Forests, at its third session,[1] agreed on the establishment of an ad hoc expert group on consideration with a view to recommending the parameters of a mandate for developing a legal framework on all types of forests. The Forum agreed that, as part of the tasks to be undertaken by it, the ad hoc expert group should consider other outcomes of the international arrangement on forests, inter alia, countries' efforts to implement the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IPF/IFF) proposals for action, other expert groups, country-led and organization-led initiatives and previous relevant initiatives, and forest-related work undertaken by the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The objective of the present note is to provide some background information to assist the ad hoc expert group in carrying out the task described above as it relates to the IPF/IFF proposals for action and the resolutions and decisions of the sessions of the Forum.

II. Reporting on the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/ Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action

2. Through the multi-year programme of work of the United Nations Forum on Forests for 2001-2005, approved at the first session of the Forum,[2] in June 2001, Member States agreed to voluntary reporting on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action related to the thematic elements contained in the table below. Reports were to take into account means of implementation such as finance, transfer of environmentally sound technologies and capacity-building, as well as common items, including, among others, emerging issues relevant to country implementation, monitoring, assessment and reporting, promoting public participation, national forest programmes, promoting an enabling environment and trade. In addition to the country reports, the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests have provided a wealth of information on the implementation of the proposals for action.

3. Of the 270 proposals for action, 12 require no further action or their implementation is far advanced and will be completed by the United Nations Forum on Forests at its fifth session.

4. A large number of proposals for action were addressed more than once in the reports submitted to the second[3] to fourth[4] sessions of the Forum. Taking into account these repetitions, progress in the implementation of 195 proposals for action were reported voluntarily by member States and the member organizations of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. These corresponded largely to the thematic elements of a more technical and scientific nature.

5. Largely owing to the nature of the multi-year programme of work for 2001-2005, there were approximately 70 proposals for action that were not reported upon. Many of these were related to means of implementation. These included 21 proposals for action for strengthening the financing of sustainable forest management and 17 on the closely related issue of transfer of environmentally sound technologies. In the area of common items to be addressed at each session of the Forum, specifically under enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination, there were 15 proposals for action related to cooperation with international organizations and multilateral institutions that were not reported upon.

Table 1
Thematic elements and proposals for action addressed at the sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Forum session	*Thematic element*	*Number of proposals for action*
Second	Combating deforestation and forest degradation	50
Second	Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems	36
Second	Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover	47
Second	Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands	11
Second	Promotion of natural and planted forests	Merged with the above
Second	Concepts, terminology and definitions	8
Third	Economic aspects of forests	49
Third	Forest health and productivity	6
Third	Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs	9
Fourth	Traditional forest-related knowledge	24
Fourth	Forest-related scientific knowledge	23
Fourth	Social and cultural aspects of forests	20
Fourth	Monitoring, assessment and reporting, concepts and terminology and definitions	22
Fourth	Criteria and indicators of sustainable forest management	11

6. The country reports are the principal documentation of progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. Their purpose is:

(a) To help countries to assess their experiences and progress in implementing relevant IPF/IFF proposals, catalyse discussion among government agencies and other stakeholders in the process of preparing the report, and help countries to prepare their interventions in the sessions of the Forum;

(b) To provide input to the reports of the Secretary-General for the sessions of the Forum, enabling the reports to identify key issues for discussion and to highlight possible subsequent international action;

(c) To furnish important information for the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests.

7. As can be appreciated in the following table, a total of 88 voluntary country reports from 55 different countries and the European Community were submitted at the second, third and fourth sessions of the Forum on progress made in the implementation of the proposals for action related to the thematic elements in table 1 above. Of these, 24 reports were from developing countries; 22 were from developed countries; and 9 were from countries with economies in transition.

Table 2
Countries providing voluntary national reports to the sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Second session	*Third session*	*Fourth session*
	1. Algeria	1. Algeria
		2. Australia
1. Austria	2. Austria	3. Austria
2. Belgium		
	3. Burundi	
3. Cambodia	4. Cambodia	
	5. Canada	4. Canada
	6. China	
	7. Colombia	
	8. Croatia	5. Croatia
		6. Cyprus
	9. Czech Republic	
		7. Democratic Republic of the Congo
		8. Denmark
		9. El Salvador
	10. European Community	
4. Finland	11. Finland	10. Finland
5. Germany	12. Germany	11. Germany
		12. Guyana
		13. Honduras
	13. Hungary	14. Hungary
	14. India	
		15. Indonesia
6. Iran, Islamic Republic of		
		16. Ireland
	15. Italy	17. Italy

Second session	*Third session*	*Fourth session*
7. Japan	16. Japan	18. Japan
	17. Kenya	
	18. Lebanon	
	19. Lithuania	19. Lithuania
	20. Malaysia	
8. Mauritius	21. Mauritius	
9. Mexico	22. Mexico	20. Mexico
	23. Netherlands	
	24. Nepal	
10. New Zealand	25. New Zealand	21. New Zealand
11. Norway	26. Norway	22. Norway
	27. Pakistan	
		23. Peru
	28. Philippines	
	29. Poland	24. Poland
12. Portugal	30. Portugal	
	31. Republic of Korea	25. Republic of Korea
		26. Russian Federation
		27. Serbia and Montenegro
		28. South Africa
	32. Spain	
		29. Sudan
13. Sweden	33. Sweden	30. Sweden
	34. Switzerland	31. Switzerland
		32. Turkey
	35. Ukraine	33. Ukraine
14. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	36. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	34. United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
	37. United States of America	35. United States of America
		36. Uruguay
	38. Yugoslavia	

8. The number of countries providing reports was relatively small, with no more than 38 reporting at any one session. Moreover, only 9 countries, none of which were developing countries or countries with economies in transition, provided reports for all three sessions and consequently addressed the 195 proposals for

action. Nine others, including two developing countries and four countries with economies in transition, submitted reports at two sessions. Taking into account the limited reporting by countries, most of which were positive and optimistic, on the implementation of the proposals for action, one should be careful not to extrapolate the results. Nevertheless, several important conclusions can be drawn from an analysis of the national reports on the status of implementation of the proposals for action.

9. Proposal for action 9 (d) (IFF) states that, for promoting and facilitating implementation, it is particularly important to have a systematic assessment, by all countries, of the IPF proposals for action and planning for their implementation in the context of countries' own national processes aimed at sustainable forest management. An examination of the national reports revealed, however, that few countries have developed institutional mechanisms and processes for monitoring and assessing the status of implementation of the proposals for action. Almost all of these are developed countries. This suggests that, while the reporting countries are committed to implementing the proposals for action, it appears that most do not have institutional mechanisms or processes for monitoring and assessing the implementation of the proposals for action on an ongoing basis.

10. The limited number of national reports has been compensated by information on the status of implementation of the proposals for action provided by the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. All Partnership members have been consulted in the preparation of the reports of the Secretary-General on the thematic elements listed in the first table. Partnership members, such as the United Nations Environment Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Bank, the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Centre for International Forestry Research and the International Union for Forestry Research, have all played a key role in the preparation of specific reports of the Secretary-General to the sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests, drawing from their broad experience and information regarding the implementation of the proposals for action at the country, regional and global levels.

11. Another valuable source of information has been the country-led and organization-led initiatives in support of the work of the Forum. Three of these contain particularly important conclusions on the status of implementation of the proposals for action: the country-led initiative on lessons learned in monitoring, assessment and reporting on the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action held from 17 to 20 March 2003 in Viterbo, Italy (E/CN.18/2003/9, annex); the Nairobi Workshop on Lessons Learned on Sustainable Forest Management in Africa, held from 9 to 13 February 2004; and the Yokohama International Expert Meeting on Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting on the Progress Towards Sustainable Forest Management held from 5 to 8 November 2001. The final report of the FAO Regional Workshop on Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action in Africa, held in Accra, from 16 to 18 February 2004, also provides important information on lessons learned.

12. The Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework papers presented to the United Nations Forum on Forests sessions also provide information on the implementation of the proposals for action addressed to the member organizations of the Partnership, as well as information on support provided to countries in the overall implementation of the proposals for action. Finally, relevant information was

also drawn from the reports of the Ad Hoc Expert Groups on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies, held in Geneva from 15 to 19 December 2003 (E/CN.18/2004/5) and on Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting, held in Geneva, from 8 to 12 December 2003 (E/CN.18/2004/2).

III. Catalysts in the implementation of the proposals for action

13. The national reports that were submitted, as well as the reports of the Secretary-General to the second to fourth sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the reports of country-led and organization-led initiatives, are a valuable repository of lessons learned in promoting sustainable forest management. They also indicate what factors have been the most effective in catalysing the implementation of the proposals for action.

Good governance

14. Both the Nairobi Workshop on Lessons Learned on Sustainable Forest Management in Africa and the meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies for sustainable forest management emphasized the importance of good governance as a prerequisite for the effective and efficient implementation of the proposals for action. Based on effective policies, honesty, transparency, the participation of all stakeholders, a solid legal framework, regulations and their application and appropriate management frameworks at the national and local levels, good governance creates, nurtures and promotes an enabling environment for the implementation of the proposals for action. Along similar lines, the final report of the Accra workshop, in its overall assessment of the implementation of the proposals for action, concluded that democratization, decentralization, political and social stability, continuity of staff, good governance, awareness raising and law enforcement were prerequisites for sustainable forest management, which in turn contributed to reduce poverty.

National forest programmes

15. The proposals for action have effectively shaped the national forest programmes and their equivalents in many countries. They have been instrumental in reshaping national forest programmes into national institutional frameworks for achieving sustainable forest management. At the same time, they have contributed to broadening the scope of such programmes to focus on related intersectoral problems and issues. Many countries have advanced the effective participation of stakeholders in the implementation of national forest programmes or their equivalents. At the same time, a number of countries have emphasized that their national forest programmes have become vehicles for meeting commitments under international agreements.

16. The Viterbo report concluded that, for effective implementation and integration in national forest programmes, the application of the proposals for action needed to take into account national and local conditions. Furthermore, not all proposals for action were relevant to all countries. It also noted that for countries to monitor and assess the implementation of proposals for action effectively, there needed to be the

identification of linkages between existing policies, programmes and strategies for sustainable forest management and the proposals for action.

Development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management

17. Criteria and indicators play a key role in national forest programmes in measuring and monitoring progress in the achievement of sustainable forest management. It is an issue that has been one of the major successes of the United Nations Forum on Forests process, cutting across all geographic regions. Of the countries reporting to the fourth session of the Forum, 75 per cent have developed, are developing or are considering the development of criteria and indicators within the context of nine international and regional cooperation frameworks, such as the Montreal Process, the International Tropical Timber Organization and the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe. This is one area where international cooperation frameworks have been especially effective in promoting sustainable forest management. A number of countries reported that their criteria and indicators were developed or are being developed in consultation with stakeholders.

18. The Yokohama report concluded that criteria and indicators had also contributed to the shaping of a common vision on what constituted sustainable forest management. There was a great deal of complementarity and similarity among criteria and indicators processes throughout the world that had contributed to the development of this common vision.

19. Countries are still at different levels of development of their criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management. Many of those that have developed criteria and indicators through global and regional processes have further refined them to reflect national and local conditions.

20. In resolution 4/3,[5] the Forum acknowledged the following thematic elements of sustainable forest management that are drawn from existing criteria and indicators processes and offer a reference framework for sustainable forest management:

1. Extent of forest resources;
2. Biological diversity;
3. Forest health and vitality;
4. Productive functions of forest resources;
5. Protective functions of forest resources;
6. Socio-economic functions;
7. Legal, policy and institutional framework.

Forest partnerships

21. The importance of forest partnerships in achieving sustainable forest management was confirmed by the World Summit on Sustainable Development, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2002. Several collaborative forest partnerships that bring together Governments and international organizations, as well as other stakeholders, have since been established that are effectively catalysing the implementation of the proposals for action. These include the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), the Congo Basin Forest

Partnership, the Asia Forest Partnership, the International Model Forest Network and the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration.

22. The role of the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests in assisting countries in the implementation of a number of proposals for action cannot be underestimated. Countries recognized the assistance they have received from Collaborative Partnership on Forests members in areas such as capacity-building for the implementation of national forest programmes; forest-related scientific research; monitoring, assessment and reporting; and the development of criteria and indicators, among others. The contributions of Partnership members to the standardization of concepts, terminology and definitions have moved the process towards greater harmonization of national forest programmes and their equivalents and, at the same time, have catalysed further efforts in the development of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management.

23. At the country level, partnerships between Governments and non-government stakeholders have proven to be effective vehicles for reinforcing the implementation of the proposals for action across a wide spectrum, including the planning and management of private forests; social forestry programmes; forest conservation; reforestation; and monitoring, assessment and reporting.

Global and regional cooperation frameworks

24. In several thematic areas, countries reported that critical issues were being addressed through global and regional cooperation frameworks. These included issues such as forest genetic resources; scientific research; monitoring, assessment and reporting; and criteria and indicators. Regional processes, such as the Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe, the Central American Commission of Sustainable Development and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty, among others, can play a very important role in reinforcing the implementation of the proposals for action. This reflects the degree and importance that international cooperation has taken in driving the sustainable forest management agenda. Moreover, in many countries, national forest programmes are linked to commitments acquired under multilateral environmental agreements.

25. Regional processes, such as the FAO regional forestry commissions and regional forestry agreements, also provide an important mechanism for exchanging information and experiences and lessons learned regarding the proposals for action that can lead to corrective actions and their improved implementation.[6]

Stakeholder participation

26. Stakeholder participation in sustainable forest management continues to become an important feature of national forest programmes. Most countries reported substantial progress in the development and utilization of various, often innovative, mechanisms and arrangements for involving stakeholders in forestry programmes. A number of countries reported progress on partnerships with the private sector in the planning and management of privately owned forests.

27. According to the Viterbo report, greater communication and consultation among government and non-government stakeholders can promote transparency, strengthen understanding and build greater support for the implementation of the proposals for action. Moreover, transparent and participatory involvement of all

major stakeholders in the monitoring and assessment of the implementation of the proposals for action can lead to their improved implementation.

28. The integration of local and indigenous communities in sustainable forest management by Governments has strengthened the implementation of the proposals for action. Half of the countries that reported to the United Nations Forum on Forests at its fourth session have operational mechanisms or channels for the participation of local and indigenous communities in forest-related decision-making. Many highlighted the importance of providing capacity-building and technology transfer to local stakeholders.

Country-led and organization-led initiatives

29. Country-led and organization-led initiatives, which are financed by host and co-sponsoring countries and co-sponsoring organizations, have been instrumental in advancing work on the implementation of the proposals for action in very specific areas. These include: finance; transfer of environmentally sound technologies for sustainable forest management; monitoring, assessment and reporting; the role of planted forests; lessons learned in efforts to achieve sustainable forest management; capacity-building; and decentralization of national forest programmes. They are particularly valuable tools for promoting the implementation of the relevant proposals for action and for exchanging information on experiences and lessons learned. In several cases they have led to direct actions on the ground for implementing relevant proposals for action.

IV. Obstacles in the implementation of the proposals for action

Assessment of progress in the implementation of the proposals for action

30. As indicated earlier (para. 9), the majority of Governments do not have in place institutional mechanisms for systematically assessing the implementation of the proposals for action, as called for in IFF proposal for action 9 (d). Given the large number of proposals for action, the wide diversity of issues that they cover and the fact that they are not available in an orderly structure, it can be very difficult for countries to assess them in a systematic manner.

31. The Viterbo report concluded that countries need strengthened capacity to implement, monitor and assess the proposals for action. This requires financial and technical assistance, including knowledge transfer. It specifically identified the need for baseline information at the national and subnational levels to monitor, assess and report on the proposals for action. It also highlighted the need to further streamline and harmonize forest-related reporting to international conventions and organizations to reduce burdens, improve efficiency, economize on costs and provide more useful information by countries. To this end, the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests have established the Partnership's Task Force on Streamlining Forest-related Reporting.

32. The report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting provides a number of recommendations for improving assessment processes at the country level, which should be reviewed by the ad hoc expert group.

Mixed progress in the development of forest monitoring and assessment capabilities

33. Those countries that provided national reports to the fourth session of the Forum reported substantial progress in this area. A total of 62.5 per cent reported that they had improved national forest databases. One half reported that they had recently completed or had ongoing forest inventories. A number of countries, principally developing countries and countries with economies in transition, reported the greater use of geographic information systems in their monitoring and assessment programmes and the importance of the Internet in disseminating information from monitoring, assessment and reporting. Many countries also reported that they were participating in global and regional monitoring and assessment programmes. Several reported that they had strengthened the dissemination of monitoring and assessment information to users, interested groups and international organizations.

34. This is an area in which the national reports paint a more positive picture than what is actually occurring in many non-reporting countries. The Nairobi workshop stressed that African countries in general have inadequate forest information systems, both in terms of quantity and quality. There is a lack of information on goods and services provided by forests. Forest inventories remain incomplete, often focusing on generalized timber data.

Insufficient knowledge of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/ Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action

35. The limited number of national reports submitted, particularly by developing countries, partially reflects a lack of knowledge regarding the proposals for action. The sheer number of proposals for action and the fact that they are not easily clustered or available in an orderly structure makes it difficult for many countries to implement them. The Accra workshop further noted that the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action was weak because they were not well known and also owing to the low level of participation of African Governments during the negotiations of those international processes.

36. The Accra workshop also concluded that regional and subregional organizations, as well as non-governmental organizations in Africa, are not sufficiently informed of and engaged in United Nations Forum on Forests processes and outcomes. Knowledge of the proposals for action by stakeholders at the national level is very limited in many countries and, consequently, is of little relevance to many of them.

37. Aware of this constraint, major panel discussions on regional initiatives on sustainable forest management were integrated into the plenary meetings of the third and fourth sessions of the Forum. A panel discussion on regional initiatives in the Amazon, Central America and Europe was held at the third session, which led to the inclusion of paragraph 12 of resolution 3/4[7] on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination that reads: "Invites representatives of various regional institutions, bodies and processes to participate in the Forum's discussions on lessons learned in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, and encourages further cooperation on sustainable forest management at the subregional and regional levels, as appropriate". As a result, two other regional panel discussions featured at the fourth session of the Forum: the panel discussion on

implementation with focus on Africa ("Africa Day") and the panel discussion on implementation with focus on small island developing States ("SIDS Day"). A number of recommendations for improving implementation of sustainable forest management were the product of these panel discussions.

Financial constraints

38. Progress has been slow and inadequate in strengthening finance for sustainable forest management. To a large extent, this is also reflected by the fact that there was no reporting on progress in the implementation of the proposals for action related to finance throughout the United Nations Forum on Forests process. In their national reports, developing countries in particular felt that they were greatly constrained in the implementation of the proposals for action in all thematic areas, owing to insufficient financial resources for capacity-building, technology transfer, monitoring and assessment and programme delivery. At the same time, a number of developing countries noted that many multilateral development banks, bilateral donors and international organizations were actively promoting technology transfer through individual projects, but that much more needed to be done.

39. The report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies provides a more in-depth analysis of financial constraints impeding sustainable forest management, as well as a number of recommendations for addressing them, that should be examined by the ad hoc expert group.

Disincentives for sustainable forest management

40. In addition to constraints generated within the forest sector, the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies concluded that the achievement of sustainable forest management can be greatly hindered by policies established outside the forest sector. This, of course, reflects the low priority given to sustainable forest management in many countries. These disincentives can include, among others, high opportunity costs, particularly in agriculture, for alternative land uses; inadequate allocation of financial resources; low priority for forests and sustainable forest management vis-à-vis other overseas development assistance priorities; restrictions on rent capture; tax incentives that favour other sectors over forests; inadequate and inappropriate policies and laws at the national level for promoting the transfer of environmentally sound technologies; inadequate law enforcement; inadequate integration of sustainable forest management issues into national, sectoral, regional and local development plans, including national poverty-reduction strategies; and unclear land tenure and property rights. This was also a conclusion of the Nairobi and Accra workshops.

41. In many cases, due to several policy and market failures, unsustainable practices are more profitable than sustainable forest management, deforestation is more tempting than sustainable resource use and incentives for reforestation can be lacking or inefficient. Perverse fiscal instruments and other incentives tend to make unsustainable practices more profitable, resulting in deforestation and forest degradation and the tying up of scarce financial resources. Furthermore, there are not enough incentives for investments to make sustainable forest management competitive with other sectors and other land uses. Externalities, common access

and the public good nature of several forest benefits do not create revenues for the investor and, therefore, do not provide incentives for investments.

Inadequate transfer of environmentally sound technologies for sustainable forest management

42. The country reports and the reports of the Secretary-General revealed that developing countries felt that transfer of environmentally sound technologies for sustainable forest management had been inadequate and that much more needed to be done in that area. However, it was also felt that progress had been achieved in some countries in the development of information management systems for promoting sustainable forest management and the application of more modern monitoring and assessment technologies. Developing countries identified the greatest need for technologies in the following areas: (a) development of information management systems for sustainable forest management; (b) utilization of modern monitoring and assessment technologies, including remote sensing and geographic information systems and tools for early warning for specific threats, such as fire; (c) improved harvesting and silvicultural practices; and (d) more efficient wood-processing and utilization technologies.

43. Greater details on constraints to technology transfer for sustainable forest management are provided in the report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies, and there are a number of recommendations for overcoming them. These have been divided into four categories: financial constraints; institutional, policy and regulatory constraints; capacity-building constraints; and enabling environment constraints. A follow-up analysis with additional recommendations is also contained in the report of the Global Workshop on Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies and Capacity-Building for Sustainable Forest Management, held in Brazzaville, from 24 to 27 February 2004.

Inadequate capacity-building, particularly in developing countries

44. Developing countries and countries with economies in transition repeatedly stress that they are greatly in need of capacity-building and the corresponding financial assistance to enable them to implement many of the proposals for action. This is a theme that cuts across national reports, the reports of the Secretary-General and the reports of the country-led and organization-led initiatives. The Accra workshop underscored the lack of institutional capacity and the prerequisite financial resources, to implement fully the proposals for action and the decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests.

45. One of the major points raised in the report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies is that capacity-building, including extension services, for improved transfer and application of environmentally sound technologies and their financing are essential, particularly for developing countries and countries with economies in transition. The report goes on to cite the lack of capacity and strategies to assess, select, import and adapt environmentally sound technologies; the limited resources and facilities for research and development in developing countries and countries with economies in transition; inadequate information management systems; limited human capacity;

and inadequate monitoring of the application and effectiveness of environmentally sound technologies.

46. The Brazzaville report sheds further light on the issue that capacity encompasses enabling policies and incentives, appropriate legislation and regulation, effective enforcement, adequate information and sufficient human resources in addition to environmentally sound technologies. It goes on to identify the range of stakeholders that need to be targeted for capacity-building: (a) government agencies; (b) political decision makers; (c) local communities; (d) the private sector; (e) civil society and non-governmental organizations; (f) educational institutions and systems; (g) research institutions; and (h) donors, financing agencies and other partners in development.

V. Follow-up to resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests

47. For follow-up purposes, the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests on coordination and thematic issues can be clustered into four categories: (a) resolutions and decisions on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination; (b) resolutions regarding follow-up to the IPF/IFF proposals for action in the thematic elements listed in table 1 above; (c) resolutions and decisions on the recommendations of the ad hoc expert groups; and (d) resolutions and decisions on financial matters. As part of the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests (see resolution 1/1, paras. 39 and 40), countries and members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests have been requested to report on the implementation of the resolutions and decisions contained in table 3, submitted to the fifth session of the Forum. However, since the ad hoc expert group is meeting before the fifth session, it will not have the opportunity to assess the results of that reporting.

Table 3
Resolutions and decisions on coordination and thematic issues of the second to fourth sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests

Resolution/decision No.	*Title*
1. Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination	
Resolution 2/1	Ministerial declaration and message from the United Nations Forum on Forests to the World Summit on Sustainable Development
Resolution 3/4	Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination[a]
Draft decision	Report of the Forum on its fourth session and provisional agenda for the fifth session of the Forum
2. Follow-up to the IPF/IFF proposals for action	
Resolution 2/2 A	Combating deforestation and forest degradation

Resolution/decision No.	*Title*
Resolution 2/2 B	Forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems
Resolution 2/2 C	Rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover
Resolution 2/2 D	Rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of natural and planted forests
Resolution 2/2 E	Concepts, terminology and definitions[b]
Resolution 3/1	Economic aspects of forests
Resolution 3/2	Forest health and productivity
Resolution 3/3	Maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs
Resolution 4/1	Forest-related scientific knowledge
Resolution 4/2	Social and cultural aspects of forests
Resolution 4/3	Forest-related monitoring, assessment and reporting; criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management
3. Recommendations of the ad hoc expert groups	
Decision 4/2	Report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies
4. Financial matters	
Draft resolution	Trust Fund for the United Nations Forum on Forests

[a] Of the 13 operative paragraphs, the United Nations Forum on Forests secretariat has reported on follow-up to 6 of them through the note by the Secretary-General on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination presented to the fourth session, while Collaborative Partnership on Forests members have reported on another 3 in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2004 (E/CN.18/2004/INF.1).

[b] Operative paragraph 2 of this decision was reported on at the third session of the Forum.

Enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination

48. Resolution 2/1 on the ministerial declaration and message from the United Nations Forum on Forests to the World Summit on Sustainable Development[8] set foundations for the work of the Forum in promoting the mainstreaming of sustainable forest management in global, regional and national development plans. The section on forests of the Summit's Plan of Implementation is based entirely on the ministerial declaration of the second session of the Forum. Many of the emerging issues addressed in the resolutions pertaining to the thematic elements arise from the ministerial declaration.

49. A great deal of the work of the Forum on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination emanates from the ministerial declaration and is reflected in resolution 3/4.[6] Through the note by the Secretary-General to the fourth session

of the Forum on enhanced cooperation and policy and programme coordination (E/CN.18/2004/13) the Forum secretariat reported on the implementation of the resolution, including follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields; coordination with international instruments and mechanisms relevant to the forest sector; and the facilitation of intersessional activities such as country-led and organization-led initiatives in support of the work of the Forum. Follow-up to the resolution by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests members was also reported in the Collaborative Partnership on Forests Framework 2004, specifically regarding support to the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action, including work on the streamlining of forest-related reporting.

Follow-up to the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests/Intergovernmental Forum on Forests proposals for action

50. At its second to fourth sessions, the Forum adopted resolutions on follow-up to the IPF/IFF proposals for action under the thematic elements in part 2 of table 3 that were addressed to Governments, members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests, other international organizations, regional bodies and major groups. All of these resolutions contain preambular paragraphs that highlight the lessons learned through the exchange of country experiences that are an important gauge for measuring progress in the implementation of the proposals for action. They basically aim at providing further guidance for enhancing the implementation of the proposals for action.

51. Several important operative paragraphs of these resolutions refer specifically to emerging issues, which broaden the scope of the work under the thematic elements. Some of these, which are of a cross-cutting nature, include: the mainstreaming of sustainable forest management in national development plans, the integration of sustainable forest management in national poverty-reduction programmes and strategies, and decentralization of decision-making on sustainable forest management, among others.[9] Consequently, at its third session, the Forum, through its draft decision for adoption by the Economic and Social Council on the report of the Forum at its fourth session and provisional agenda for its fifth session, decided that the high-level ministerial segment and policy dialogue with heads of organizations participating in the Collaborative Partnership would focus on the linkages between forests and the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Recommendations of the ad hoc expert groups

52. In its decision 4/2 on the report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies,[10] the Forum acknowledged that the report contained a wide range of recommendations which could serve as a reference for promoting future actions by member States, Partnership members and other relevant organizations. While encouraging them to consider and take concrete action on these recommendations, the Forum decided to give further consideration to the issues of finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies, including the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Expert Group, in the United Nations Forum on Forests programme of work. If integrated into the future programme of work on forests, the recommendations of the Ad Hoc Expert Group would address a wide range of emerging issues that would greatly broaden the scope of the existing IPF/IFF proposals for action, both in finance and transfer of environmentally sound technologies for sustainable forest management.

53. The recommendations of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Approaches and Mechanisms for Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting were taken into account in resolution 4/3,[11] which was covered in the introductory paragraph of the previous section on follow-up to the IPF/IFF proposals for action.

Resolutions on financial matters

54. With the exception of resolution 2/2 E[8] on concepts, terminology and definitions, all of the resolutions on the thematic elements of the multi-year programme of work 2001-2005 include a number of operative paragraphs on financial assistance directed at the donor community and the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests.

55. Some important decisions were taken regarding the Global Environment Facility (GEF). In operative paragraph 2 of resolution 2/2 D,[8] the Forum encouraged countries to call upon the GEF Assembly at its next meeting, to be held from 14 to 18 October 2002, to approve the establishment of a focal area for land degradation, primarily desertification and deforestation, in GEF, which in fact was one of the principal outcomes of the GEF Assembly held in Beijing. Subsequently, through operative paragraph 9 of resolution 3/4, the Forum invited GEF, within its mandate and respective operational programmes and strategies, to give due consideration to financing the projects on, inter alia, combating deforestation and forest degradation, forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems, rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover, rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of natural and planted forests.[12] In its report, the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies further recommended that the United Nations Forum on Forests, supported by Collaborative Partnership members, invite GEF to facilitate Partnership members' contributions in advising on the development of the implementation aspects of the sustainable forest management component of the sustainable land management focal area and in addition, to coordinate a capacity-building initiative with countries qualifying for GEF grants for sustainable forest management, with a view to increasing their financial support.

VI. General conclusions

56. **National reports are fundamental instruments for assessing progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.**

57. **Many developing countries and countries with economies in transition require assistance in developing methodologies for assessing the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action at the national level. Few countries appear to have a systematic approach in place for this kind of assessment.**

58. **Reporting by developing countries needs to be improved. Consideration should be given to providing financial assistance in this area to developing countries, as has been the case in some international agreements and processes.**

59. **In many countries, national forest programmes have been shaped and strengthened by the IPF/IFF proposals for action, broadening the scope of national forest programmes to address related intersectoral problems and issues.**

60. **Nevertheless, there still exists insufficient knowledge of the IPF/IFF proposals for action in many developing countries, particularly in Africa, which needs to be rectified. Consequently, progress in the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action has been below expectations in Africa.**

61. **National reports, reports of the Secretary-General, reports of country-led and organization-led initiatives, as well as the report of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Finance and Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies, indicate that implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action has been severely constrained by the inadequate availability of funding for sustainable forest management.**

62. **Inadequate funding has particularly constrained the transfer, adaptation, application and monitoring of environmentally sound technologies, which are indispensable for sustainable forest management.**

63. **Many developing countries and countries with economies in transition lack the capacity to implement the proposals for action effectively and efficiently. Limited availability of funding for capacity-building is a major hindrance to the implementation of the proposals for action.**

64. **The implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action are also severely affected by perverse policies and disincentives established outside the forest sector. Often as a result of policy and market failures beyond the scope of decision makers in the forest sector, unsustainable practices are more profitable than sustainable forest management.**

65. **Criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management are critical to the successful implementation of national forest programmes. Moreover, they have played a major role in the development of a common vision of what constitutes sustainable forest management.**

66. **While there has been progress in the development of forest assessment capabilities at the national level, including forest inventories, much more needs to be done to strengthen these capabilities in developing countries and countries with economies in transition.**

67. **Efforts at achieving sustainable forest management at the national level through the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action have been greatly underpinned by global and regional cooperation frameworks, forest partnerships and stakeholder participation.**

68. **The members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests have played a strategic role in promoting and supporting the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. Moreover, the Partnership is considered to be one of the outstanding models of inter-agency collaboration in the United Nations system.**

69. **Country-led and organization-led initiatives are a unique mechanism employed in supporting, both financially and technically, the work of the United Nations Forum on Forests and the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action.**

70. **Further reporting on follow-up to the impiementation of most of the resolutions and decisions of the United Nations Forum on Forests referred to in the present paper will be undertaken within the framework of the review of the effectiveness of the international arrangement on forests at the fifth session of**

the United Nations Forum on Forests, which will not be available for the ad hoc expert group.

71. Foundations laid by the ministerial declaration at the second session of the United Nations Forum on Forests have broadly widened the scope of the proposals for action by linking sustainable forest management to the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration. The United Nations Forum on Forests, at its fourth session, strongly urged countries to mainstream sustainable forest management in national development plans and national poverty-alleviation programmes and strategies.

72. Much of the focus of the last three sessions of the United Nations Forum on Forests has been on encouraging the donor community and the members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests to provide greater financial support to the work of the Forum and the implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. Special attention has been given to encouraging support through the Global Environment Facility.

Notes

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 22* (E/2003/42).

[2] Ibid., *2001, Supplement No. 22* (E/2001/42/Rev.1), chap. I.B, resolution 1/1.

[3] Ibid., *2002, Supplement No. 22* (E/2002/42).

[4] Ibid., *2004, Supplement No. 22* (E/2004/22).

[5] Ibid., chap. I.B.

[6] Examples are contained in the reports of the Regional Workshop on Implementation of the IPF/IFF Proposals for Action in Africa, held in Accra, from 16 to 18 February 2004, the Workshop on Lessons Learned on Sustainable Forest Management in Africa, held in Nairobi from 9 to 13 February 2004 and the Government-designated Expert Meeting on the Transfer of Environmentally Sound Technologies for the Sustainable Management of Mangrove Forests in Latin America and the Wider Caribbean, held in Managua, from 3 to 5 March 2003.

[7] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2003, Supplement No. 22* (E/2003/42), chap. I.C.

[8] Ibid., *2002, Supplement No. 22* (E/2002/42), chap. II.B.

[9] Within the framework of the United Nations Forum on Forests, the term "emerging issues" refers to issues that are not covered under the existing IPF/IFF proposals for action.

[10] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2004, Supplement No. 22* (E/2004/42), chap. I.C.

[11] Ibid., chap. I.B.

[12] See also the reports of the Secretary-General on: the rehabilitation and restoration of degraded lands and the promotion of natural and planted forests (E/CN.18/2002/3); combating deforestation and forest degradation (E/CN.18/2002/6); progress in the implementation of rehabilitation and conservation strategies for countries with low forest cover (E/CN.18/2002/7); forest conservation and protection of unique types of forests and fragile ecosystems (E/CN.18/2002/9); economic aspects of forests (E/CN.18/2003/7); and maintaining forest cover to meet present and future needs (E/CN.18/2003/8).